

Disney had installed some pretty hardcore security systems at the Enchanted Mountain since Tinkerbell got mugged.



SHREK

BUY IT FOR...

- THE 21ST CENTURY'S FIRST GREAT FAIRY TALE
- EDDIE MURPHY MAKING AN ASS OF HIMSELF
- EXTRA FOOTAGE BRINGS ACTUAL PURPOSE TO KARAOKE CRAZE

DETAILS

RRP \$39.95 RATING PG YEAR 2001

DIRECTOR ANDREW ADAMSON,
VICKY JENSON

STARRING THE VOICES OF MIKE MYERS,
EDDIE MURPHY, CAMERON DIAZ

PICTURE ANAMORPHIC WIDESCREEN 1.78:1

SOUND DOLBY DIGITAL 5.1

THE FILM

THERE'S A WHOLE LOTTA HIGH FALUTIN' STUFF WE COULD SAY ABOUT *Shrek*.

It's the best revisionist fairytale since *The Princess Bride*! It's a post modern triumph! It's the best movie of the year! Blah, blah, blah...

Those things are all true, certainly, but don't they miss the point? Isn't this, when you get right down to it, just the touching story of a boy and his donkey? A big, green, ugly boy and his smart-ass, stub-legged donkey? I think it is.

In fact, *Shrek* is deceptively complex. It milks a lot of its laughs by taking a

familiar concept and playing it out to some hilarious level of absurdity. It's not enough to have just a couple of fairy tale characters. No, this fairy tale has to round up every fairy tale character you can think of – from Little Red Riding Hood to Pinocchio to Snow White to The Gingerbread Man – do some clever twist on each one and then move them all to a relocation camp as part of the plot. (It plays a hell of a lot funnier on screen than it does on paper.)

It's got a dragon, but this one's a swingin' lady dragon who has more things on her mind than just guarding

some stupid princess. As for that princess... well, we don't want to give anything away, right? But let's just say she's extremely complicated. And at the centre of it all is an ogre who, unlike your traditionally malevolent ogre-type monstrosity, pretty much just wants to be left alone in his swamp to take mudbaths and fart.

So there's a lot going on here, to say the least. But underneath all of the storybook satire, Disney-baiting jokes and rapid-fire punchlines there are some very simple reasons why this movie is so ridiculously good. One, its



John Lithgow's Prince wasn't too happy about the lack of a mention in the review, so he created a special Voodoo Gingerbread Palopoli.



"MYERS DOES A FANTASTIC TURN; MURPHY'S AN ANIMATED RIOT"

cartoon characters are more interesting and better developed than 95 per cent of the "real" human characters we've seen in the movies this year.

Two, it's got that mysterious quality the best movies have to sucker us in to an age-old story (heroic journeying, princess rescuing, falling in love and so on) by making us feel like we've never seen it done in quite this way before.

Three, Eddie Murphy hasn't been this funny in years. Mike Myers does a fantastic turn as Shrek, playing off his *Austin Powers* Fat Bastard voice, but as his neurotic donkey sidekick, called Donkey, Murphy is worth a snort every time he opens his mouth. Whether he's rattling on about needing therapy, mastering stairs and making waffles, he's a computer animated riot.

The animation, by the way, is definitely different. You might think it's revolutionary, or maybe not, but chances are you won't notice it all that much anyway. Like the *Toy Story* movies, it's sometimes easy to forget that what you're actually seeing on screen in *Shrek* is computer generated.

THE DISC

PICTURE: *Shrek* looks great, and the transfer on both the full-frame and widescreen version is terrific. Those who thought that the animation was ill-conceived on the big screen, though, won't have any particular reason to like it more here – if anything, seeing it on the small screen adds a little bit to the "video game" feel some complained about in the human characters.

SOUNDS: Gaseous ogre noises ring out in glorious Dolby.

FILM-MAKER COMMENTARY: Some interesting stuff on how the story underwent a lot of changes along the way (*Shrek*, for instance, was originally an ogre who wanted more than anything to be a knight), plus some insight is given into how hard the actors had to work to really nail their characters.

THE TECH OF SHREK: An insight into just how incredibly involved and complex a process it was to bring *Shrek* and his pals to life. A little too self-congratulatory in parts.

ANIMATION INTERVIEWS: Fans of the movie were looking forward to this as a highlight of the disc, since most of the main characters (Myers, Murphy and Diaz) came back to record some extra material.

But while these mock interviews with the animated characters are

generally funny, they're also incredibly short. Murphy's, predictably, is funniest.

GAMES: The US edition of the disc included both deleted scenes and a 'technical goofs' section. We don't get either – in their place is the games section; a couple of insipid, only marginally interactive 'swap the bodyparts and outfits' type of game that entertain for about 30 seconds.

EXTRA ENDING MATERIAL: See (*Feature Focus*).

INTERNATIONAL DUBBING

FEATURETTE: A weird but kinda cool segment on the normally unsung actors around the world who dub the characters' voices in other languages.

PRODUCTION NOTES: Another poor substitute. Where there was a 'character design progression reel', showing the characters evolving before your very

eyes, we are treated to another recap of the movie's plot presented in storybook format a la opening credits. Great.

CAST/FILMMAKERS: Both sections standard fare and none too exciting.

DVD-ROM FEATURES: Wow – there's a lot of stuff here, including the much-

anticipated ReVoice Studio, where you can dub your voice onto several scenes. Where US punters are treated to a two-disc set stuffed full of features that were specially designed to showcase or reveal the magic of the movie and character animation, we get pages and pages of text. Quite why this happened is a mystery – unless Universal's cunning plan is to stiff Australian movie fans with a separate collector's edition later on, containing all the good stuff.

STEVE PALOPOLI

DID YOU KNOW?

Mike Myers originally used a voice much closer to his own for the character of *Shrek*, but wasn't happy with it. He eventually convinced the producers to let him try the now familiar Scottish brogue, and it cost the studio an estimated US\$4 million to reanimate the movie with the newly recorded dialogue.

↑ FEATURE FOCUS

END GAMES

Less of a finale, more a fairy tale edition of *Night Fever*

The additional three minutes of footage you've heard about isn't actually in the movie itself, but tacked on as an extra bit at the end. It's still dead-on though – a karaoke party that has the animated ogre and his animated friends sweatin' their digital bits to the hits.

Particularly funny are Donkey's swank take on *Baby Got Back*, the princess writhing on the ground to *Like A Virgin*, and that, uh... flamboyant Robin Hood belting out *YMCA*. There's just a few seconds for each song, of course, but that's really all you need, and the joke builds from the sincere and sweet ballad *Shrek* serenades his sweetheart with, up to *The Gingerbread Man* singing *Do You Really Want to Hurt Me*?

Honestly, there should have been more of this type of thing in the bonus material – not necessarily more footage, since you can only expect so much from the cast and animators (even a short bit like this no doubt took a massive amount of time and energy), but more of this clever, irreverent spirit that draws on the same elements that made the movie this year's coolest surprise.



IS IT WORTH IT?

This release is a breakthrough in terms of DVD-ROM, but the extras lack much of a surprise or fun factor. Despite the hoopla over these special features, it's still really the movie that sells this package.

